



Government Administration & Elections Committee

March 25, 2022

The Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) is Connecticut's statewide association of towns and cities and the voice of local government - your partners in governing Connecticut. Our members represent 99% of Connecticut's population. We appreciate the opportunity to testify on bills of interest to towns and cities.

SB-467 AA Extending Permitting Remote Public Meetings Under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Through December 31, 2022.

CCM opposes SB-467 as written. We recommend simply removing the end or sunset date altogether, currently April 30, 2022, for municipal agencies to conduct remote or hybrid meetings rather than setting another end date of December 31, 2022. Removing the sunset date effectively codifies the recommendations of the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (ACIR) who was tasked with reviewing and analyzing, in consultation with the Freedom of Information Commission and the Connecticut Association of Municipal Attorneys, on how best to hold remote or hybrid meetings at the municipal level. They were given this responsibility by the legislature in Sec. 154 of Public Act 21-2.

They recognized the importance of having the ability to continue holding remote or hybrid meetings, but recognized the challenges municipalities would have if they were required or mandated to hold remote or hybrid meetings for every municipal board or commission.

Some of the challenges include a municipality's capacity to hold remote or hybrid meetings, which includes space and logistical considerations, technology, staffing and the ability to authenticate an individual's eligibility to vote. Until these challenges are addressed adequately, remote and hybrid meetings should remain permissive.

If enacted, SB-467 will effectively disallow the use of remote or hybrid meetings upon passage until July 1, 2022. This most likely would occur prior to the end of session in the first week of May, which is in the heart of the municipal budget season. This will inevitably cause confusion and will unnecessarily disrupt how municipalities conduct their meetings and hearings. Cities and towns want to preserve the ability to hold remote or hybrid meetings.

CCM opposes SB-467 since the current framework municipalities are operating under as it relates to remote or hybrid meetings is working. Again, removing the sunset date altogether will relieve the pressure and uncertainty municipalities would face if it were to remain or pushed out to December 31, 2022, as this proposal contemplates.

If you have any questions, please contact [Brian O'Connor](#), Director of Public Policy for CCM.